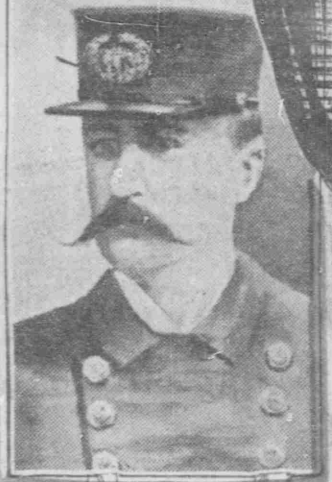


At the Sign of the Green Lamp

THE DISCREDITED MECCA OF THE POLICE DEPARTMENT



Capt. Thomas Reilly



Capt. Richard O'Connor



Capt. Chapman



Entrance to the 19th Precinct Police Station



Inspector Schmittberger



Capt. John F. Flood



Capt. Price



Capt. Richard Walsh



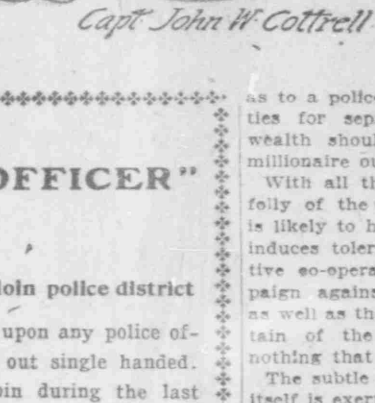
Capt. Hyles O'Reilly



Capt. W. Burfeind



Capt. John W. O'Connor



Capt. John W. Cottrell

Sixteen Commanders in Twelve Years Is the Record, Yet the Tenderloin "Lid" Remains Unriveted

LIKE the hulks of stout ships on the sands of Sable Island, the wrecks of public reputations strew the Nineteenth Precinct of the city of New York. Time was when the goal of every police captain's ambition was the command of the "Tenderloin." Aleck Williams gave the precinct that name when, in his elation at being made its ruler, he said:

"I've been getting chuck steak for years, but now I'll have the tenderloin." What he meant is obvious.

For years the Nineteenth Precinct was the choice cut for captains and wardmen, and some of them retired with comfortable fortunes after serving there for a time; but to-day might be written under the green light that glows above the station house door: "Who enters here leaves hope behind."

The Tenderloin has become the graveyard of ambitions and reputations.

"Uneasy Lies the Head That Wears a Crown."

IN twelve years the command of the Nineteenth Precinct has been changed sixteen times, and some of its captains have lasted but a few weeks. To be ordered to take charge of the Tenderloin, now, is to a captain equivalent to being told off to lead a forlorn hope.

In the old days the Tenderloin was a wide-open haunt of vice. The lid was off, and the captain of the precinct was not expected to put it on. His duty was to suppress crime of the cruder sort and keep the most flagrant indecencies partly under cover, and he derived a large income from the sale of indulgences to gamblers, saloon keepers and disorderly persons generally.

It was a "soft snap," an "easy graft" in the halcyon and vociferous days of the Tenderloin, and no police captain in command lost any sleep trying to clean up the precinct.

But there came a time when public patience with the flaunting insolence

of privileged vice ended, and the police were commanded to enforce the laws and make the Tenderloin outwardly decent. Captains who meant to be straight went confidently through the door under the green light and announced their purpose to "clean up the precinct in forty-eight hours." Some lasted a few weeks, others a few months, none so long as two years.

They came out of that door defeated, discouraged, discredited or disgraced—according to their natures.

Few of them could tell why they failed, and no two who tried to explain agreed as to the reason for the Tenderloin's victory over the law. To comprehend the task set for a captain of the Nineteenth Precinct, one must know the Tenderloin and its population. It is the quarter of the city in which New Yorkers and visitors having money to spend seek amusement at night. That amusement may be rational and found in the theaters or elsewhere, or it may be vicious and dissolute and found in the gambling dens, drinking places and resorts of the half-world.

The Tenderloin is the nocturnal hunting ground of all the predatory tribe, and so long as the game frequents the district, the wolf-pack will follow.

Not an Easy Task.

It is not impossible for the police to enforce laws relating to the closing of saloons. Even the more obnoxious resorts of disorderly women can be closed by a mere wave of the policeman's hand. Crime can be suppressed and vice forced to hide itself from public view. The gamblers can be compelled to carry on their business under cover. The new captain of the precinct knows the extent of his power to compel outward obedience to the law, and he flatters himself that his task is easy.

But closing the saloons at midnight and shutting up the dives and dance halls do not satisfy the demands of

"THE MOST THANKLESS TASK EVER IMPOSED UPON ANY POLICE OFFICER"

BY INSPECTOR MAX SCHMITTBERGER

Who climbed from patrolman to captain in his eighteen and a half years in the Tenderloin police district

I CONSIDER the command of the Tenderloin district the most thankless task ever imposed upon any police officer. The duties are so onerous that it is almost impossible to faithfully carry them out single handed. To my mind that fact is responsible for the many changes in the command of the Tenderloin during the last decade.

It must be remembered that while the work of the police in other precincts is more or less unknown the Tenderloin is constantly in the fierce light of public criticism, and the police captain who retires from there without the severest censure for action taken in the best of faith is certainly a lucky man. The worst of it is his critics will not trouble themselves to learn the conditions existing in the Nineteenth District; all find fault with matters of which they are ignorant.

To-day the Tenderloin, compared to what it was fifteen or even ten years ago, is almost angelic, but the work is still as thankless as it is trying. The man who can stand from one to two years of the constant anxiety and terrible strain is stronger mentally and physically than the majority of his fellow mortals.

those who want the Tenderloin "cleaned up," and the captain soon discovers that he is expected to abolish vice itself, to reform all the evil human nature around him and to obliterate rather than clean the Tenderloin.

When he realizes what all that means he either wears himself down to a nervous wreck trying to achieve the impossible or quits trying and waits for his superior officers to make another awful example of him.

There is a Camorra of the Tenderloin, unorganized but governed by a common spirit, which no police captain has been able to cope with because its influence extends into the station house itself. He may come to an understanding with it, and so lighten his own labors for a time, but if he attempts to fight it he finds nothing tangible to deal with and yet realizes that he is opposed at every turn and baffled by his own instruments.

The Ministers of Vice.

Vice in the abstract is loathsome, and that is what the police captain's superiors and critics have in view when they contemplate the problem of the Tenderloin. But the ministers of vice are not always loathsome persons, and the policeman comes into contact with them

and not with abstract concepts.

The gambler is commonly a good-natured, companionable human being, and he does not seem a criminal to the policeman who meets him every day, and perhaps chats with him at night on the corner.

The saloonkeeper who evades the Excise law is not a desperate villain to the patrolman on the beat. Even the woman of the shadow is human, strange as that may seem to the crusaders against vice.

as to a police commissioner that facilities for separating himself from his wealth should be denied to a young millionaire out on a lark.

With all the vice and profligacy and folly of the Tenderloin the policeman is likely to have that familiarity which induces toleration, and without his active co-operation in an offensive campaign against the statutory offenders as well as the actual criminals, the captain of the precinct can accomplish nothing that will satisfy the reformers.

The subtle influence of the Tenderloin itself is exerted constantly and potentially against the man who tries to reform the quarter. It is something that he

cannot define, nor can he grapple with it and test its strength.

If he yields to it, he goes out disgraced. If he defies it, he wears his heart out and breaks down in sheer despair. And the baleful green light winks insolently at the captain who leaves the Nineteenth precinct a confessed failure, and goes back to the goats of Harlem or the Bronx.

Tenderloin captains have closed the gambling houses for a few weeks at a time, and since the days of open and shameless "grafting" and collusion with the criminal element came to an end, the worst of the dives have ceased to affront decency. The notorious criminals, who ran saloons and gathered about them a following of burglars, bunco sharks, strong-arm thieves and night prowlers, have been driven into retirement, and it is no longer charged that the crooks have more pull than honest citizens with the powers that rule behind the green light.

The captains who have come and gone during the past decade have made crimes against person and property as rare in the Nineteenth Precinct as in most thickly populated quarters, but the Tenderloin is still the haunt of vice that flourishes under the electric light.

MUST BE ACTIVE DAY AND NIGHT.

BY JOHN F. COWAN,

Third Deputy Police Commissioner.

THE so-called Tenderloin precinct is conceded to be the field of greatest police activity in the city of New York. Its requirements involve a severe mental and physical strain upon its commanding officer.

In order to do his full duty, he must be mentally alert and physically active at all times of the day and night.

Of course the conspicuousness of police service in that precinct opens the way to deserved promotion, and the efficient police captain may therefore be impelled in the first instance to accept its arduous duties as an opportunity to earn the commendation of his superiors.

It is quite likely, however, that the immense responsibility for the good order and cleanliness of this precinct may in time wear upon him so that of his own notion he will prefer a quieter field of usefulness and the opportunity of spending some leisure time with his family, which is practically denied him by the extent and character of his duties in that busy precinct.

1887--TENDERLOIN POLICE CAPTAINS--1904

| Name. | Appointed. | Transferred. |
|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Thomas Reilly | August 9, 1887 | April 19, 1892 |
| Wm. H. McLaughlin | April 19, 1892 | October 3, 1892 |
| Richard O'Connor | October 3, 1892 | December 5, 1893 |
| M. F. Schmittberger | December 5, 1893 | January 5, 1895 |
| Patrick H. Pickett | January 9, 1895 | June 10, 1896 |
| George S. Chapman (1) | June 10, 1896 | September 18, 1897 |
| Michael Sheehan (1) | September 18, 1897 | July 26, 1898 |
| James K. Price | July 26, 1898 | January 14, 1900 |
| Andrew J. Thomas | January 14, 1900 | March 5, 1901 |
| George S. Chapman (2) | March 15, 1901 | April 7, 1901 |
| John F. Flood | April 7, 1901 | December 23, 1901 |
| Michael Sheehan (2) | December 23, 1901 | October 1, 1902 |
| Richard Walsh | October 1, 1902 | January 1, 1903 |
| Myles O'Reilly | January 1, 1903 | March 14, 1903 |
| John W. O'Connor | March 14, 1903 | September 16, 1903 |
| Henry W. Burfeind | September 16, 1903 | February 23, 1904 |
| John V. Cottrell | February 23, 1904 | |